



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Kimberly A. Foster
Executive Director

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DR. HARRIETTE F. WILLIAMS
TRULA J. WORTHY-CLAYTON

APPROVED MINUTES

The Special Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, December 15, 2008 held at the Chicana Services Action Center – Gloria Molina Conference Center located at 3601 E. First Street, Los Angeles, California 90063. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Carol O. Biondi	Sandra Rudnick
Ann Franzen	Stacey Savelle
Susan Friedman	Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Helen Kleinberg	Martha Trevino Powell
Rev. Cecil Murray	Trula J. Worthy-Clayton
Steven M. Olivas, Esq.	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Tina Pedersen, LCSW	

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Patricia Curry
Dr. La-Doris McClaney

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Sorkin.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made by the audience.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Action

Motion by Commissioner Franzen, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, the Agenda for the December 15, 2008 Special Meeting was unanimously approved.

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- November 17, 2008

Action

Motion by Commissioner Franzen, seconded by Commissioner Pedersen, the November 17, 2008 Minutes were unanimously approved as written.

- December 1, 2008 – Commissioner Worthy-Clayton recommended changes in the wording on page 5; the Commissioner will provide recommended language. Commissioner Williams thanked the Commission for including the Public Comments in the December 1, 2008 Minutes. The comments were very significant and stated issues that need to be addressed by the Relative Care Committee.

Action

Motion by Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner Savelle, the December 1, 2008 Minutes were unanimously approved with amendments.

V. **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Commission Chair Sorkin thanked Commissioner Franzen for providing coffee and pastries for today's Commission meeting at the Chicano Service Action Center. Commissioner Sorkin provided a brief history of the Chicana Service Action Center and gave an overview of the services provided to the community. These services include assisting with resume writing, domestic violence programs including emergency shelter and housing for domestic violence victims, and working with CalWORKS clients to inform them of services.

- **Cancellation of January 19, 2009 General Commission Meeting**

Action

Motion by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Worthy-Clayton, cancellation of the January 19, 2009 General Meeting was unanimously approved.

- **Approval of 2007-2008 Commission Annual Report** – Commissioner Sorkin thanked Commissioners Kleinberg and Williams for their help in finalizing the recommendation section of the Annual Report. Commissioner Sorkin informed the committee that most of the report remained the same except for the recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Chair informed the Commission that the revised recommendations were distributed this morning on a separate page for their review. Commissioner Savelle recommended rewording changes to Recommendation #8 and she will provide the recommended language to the Commission office. The Commission also suggested stronger wording for the recommendations (i.e., direct the Board of Supervisors) on all recommendations and specifically on #4 and #9. The Commission had other minor revisions to be included in the final Report.

Action

Motion by Commissioner Rudnick, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, the 2007-2008 Commission Annual Report was unanimously approved, as amended.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Trish Ploehn, DCFS Director, gave updates on the following:

- Holiday Activities for Clients - Approximately 21 Holiday parties throughout the County and 10,000 gifts have been collected/donated and given out to needy families, with more gifts expected to arrive before the holidays. Several fund raisers were conducted within DCFS and the Faith-Based organizations which culminated with the Faith-Based Council in South Bay, donating 1,000 toys.

Commissioner Worthy-Clayton stated that also the Pasadena Faith-Based Organization also fulfilled and distributed all the requests they received from the Pasadena Office. Some of the requests filled were for computers and IPODs. Ms. Ploehn stated how impressed she was with the generosity of the providers and the public.

- Emergency Response Summit – Ms. Ploehn informed the Commission that she attended the DCFS Emergency Response (ER) Summit last week along with approximately 150 DCFS staff. The focus of the summit was to investigate consistent barriers and redefine front line contact with CSWs. A decision was made to set-up an Emergency Response Committee to continue discussions.

Commissioner Savelle suggested sharing the information from the Emergency Response Summit with the Commission and the Child Fatality Committee.

- Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) – Ms. Ploehn stated that this is a new strategy coming out in child welfare systems across the country.

Follow-Up

DCFS will share information and findings from the Emergency Response Summit with the Commission and the Child Fatality Committee.

VII. COUNTYWIDE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATION COMMITTEE (CCJCC)

Mark Delgado, Executive Director of CCJCC, gave a brief informative overview of CCJCC. He indicated that the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee was formed by the Board of Supervisors in the mid 1980's to bring together one of the largest Sheriff and local juvenile justice systems in the country. CCJCC is chaired by the Board of Supervisors' Chair and has 60 members consisting of City, State, and Federal partners. Some of CCJCC's major projects and Subcommittees include: Jail Overcrowding Reduction Subcommittee, DNA Task Force, Countywide Warrant System, and Drug Courts.

Many of CCJCC's projects deal with issues related to the juvenile justice system such as:

- 1) Drug Court Program - This program deals with juveniles in Sylmar, Eastlake, and Inglewood and mandates regular attendance at school and 12 step programs;
- 2) Women's Reentry Court - This program offers probationers and parolees, in lieu of a reentry sentence to State prisons, six months residential treatment, six months outpatient treatment, and allows them to keep two children with them;
- 3) Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) - This program is a three-year, three-phase pilot program. Phase One is to determine the extent of DMC. The preliminary findings indicate

that DMC does exist. DMC is found throughout all stages of the juvenile justice system. African American youth are overrepresented at arrest, court referral, and detention. The major factor for DMC is the intake decision process at Juvenile Hall. Some recommendations include Probation overriding decisions, using the risk assessment instrument (purpose/use of detention), and the juvenile justice system reviewing alternatives to juvenile detention. The Phase One report will be provided to the Commission. Phase Two is to engage in stakeholder collaboration and will be completed in February 2009. Phase Three is the implementation of a DMC Reduction Plan which will begin in 2009; 4) Gangs – CCJCC has a standing subcommittee, the Interagency Gang Task Force. This subcommittee has been in a state of “flux” and has not met in the past several months. The Chief Executive Office (CEO) has a new Countywide Gang Strategy and is moving in a more comprehensive manner in the new direction of the County. The goal is to maximize impact when dealing with families and to coordinate services of County Departments.

Follow-Up

Mr. Delgado will provide the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Phase One report within the next week to the Commission Executive Director for distribution to the Commission.

The Commission had some concerns they wanted addressed by the Jail Overcrowding Reduction Committee. Commissioner Worthy-Clayton encouraged them to review the juveniles housed in juvenile detention but heard in adult courts. This population has a significant difference in detention level from juveniles heard in juvenile courts and there is also a lack of a juvenile warrant tracking system for this same group that should be addressed. These are some systemic issues that need to be addressed in this area. Commissioner Rudnick suggested CCJCC collaborating with DCFS’ Prevention Initiative to help alleviate problems before detention. Commissioner Kleinberg voiced concerns regarding the system’s attitudes and treatment of families of the incarcerated as well as the visitation policy for families. She stated families with children wait in line outside in the rain for hours in order to visit someone. Commissioner Biondi expressed concerns regarding overcrowding in juvenile halls. She questioned their involvement in the three juvenile halls that may be found unsuitable due to overcrowding. Mr. Delgado stated that juvenile halls are not being addressed as part of the Jail Overcrowding Reduction Subcommittee, it is specific to County jails. Commissioner Kleinberg also suggested that in regard to the drug situation, that this should be addressed as a symptom/problem.

Follow-Up

Mr. Delgado will relay all of the Commissioners concerns to the Jail Overcrowding Reduction Subcommittee and Drug Court Oversight Committee.

VIII. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

- **Childhood Obesity Committee**
 - **Action Regarding Letter to Board of Supervisors Regarding the Development of Strategies to Address Childhood Obesity** - Childhood Obesity Committee Chair, Tina Pedersen presented a revised draft of the letter to the Board of Supervisors incorporating previously recommended changes by the Commission. The Commissioners reviewed the draft letter and recommended some minor changes including referring to DCFS as DCFS and not “the Department”; in Recommendation 3, the reference to 1999 guidelines should be changed to “the most up-to-date

guidelines”, and include stakeholders and youth. Commissioner Pedersen will revise the language for Recommendation 3.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jodi Kurata, Child Welfare Policy Director, from the Associate of Community Human Services Agencies (ACHSA) commented on Recommendations 3 & 4 of the letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Development of Strategies to Address Childhood Obesity. Ms. Kurata stated that ACHSA supports these efforts. However, ACHSA recommends the wording be changed to “Collaborate” with the Department of Children and Family Services with respect to the new guidelines in the contracts.

Action

Motion by Commissioner Biondi, seconded by Commissioner Worthy-Clayton, the letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Development of Strategies to Address Childhood Obesity was unanimously approved, as amended.

- **Action Regarding Childhood Obesity Committee Name Change to Wellness Committee** – Commissioner Pedersen recommended a name change of the Childhood Obesity Committee to reflect the expanded focus of the Committee.

Action

Motion by Commissioner Pederson, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, the Childhood Obesity Committee name change to Childhood Wellness Committee was unanimously approved.

- **Child Fatality Committee**

- **Action Regarding Letter to Board of Supervisors Regarding DCFS and Probation Child Fatality Case Review Findings and Recommendations** - Child Fatality Committee Chair, Susan Friedman presented the Commission two versions of a draft letter to the Board of Supervisors. The letter indicating “draft” was created by the Chair of Child Fatality Committee, Commissioner Susan Friedman; and the other letter indicating “draft 2” was created by Commissioner Chair Adelina Sorkin. After the Commission and County Counsel reviewed the two drafts, they discussed concerns about how much detailed case information should be included in the letter. At the conclusion of an extensive discussion regarding this item, the members of the committee indicated they had not been provided copies of the letter prior to today’s meeting.

Follow-Up

It was agreed that the letters be reviewed by the Child Fatality Committee and incorporate the recommendations. The final draft will then be presented to the Commission for approval.

County Counsel Aleen Langton recommended that the Child Fatality Committee review the letter to be presented to the full Commission. In addition, County Counsel should review the letter that will be considered by the Commission to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public Comments were recorded under Item VIII, Committee/Liaison Reports, Childhood Obesity Committee letter to the Board of Supervisors.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commission Sorkin announced that Marian Wright Edelman will appear in Long Beach, California. Commission Chair Sorkin will send out information to the Commission providing the exact details.

XI. ADJOURN

Commission Chair Sorkin adjourned the meeting.